

PLO, Yemen conditionally welcome conference

YEMEN (R) — President Ali Abdullah Saleh of Yemen and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat said Sunday they welcomed a Middle East peace conference provided it guaranteed the "national rights of Palestinians." Radio Sanaa said. The radio said Mr. Saleh and Mr. Arafat stressed that the peace conference should "aim to achieve the right to self-determination and to establish the Palestinian state with Al Quds as its capital." Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and several other Arab countries have accepted U.S. Middle East peace proposals and a joint U.S.-Soviet call for a conference to be held in October. Radio Sanaa said President Saleh and Mr. Arafat "stressed the need to invoke the principle of land for peace... and the PLO participation [in the conference] as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." It quoted Mr. Saleh as saying "any compromise over the holy Al Quds... is considered as a conspiracy against the Arab Nation and the Islamic sanctities."

Volume 16 Number 4773

AMMAN MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 1991, SAFR 2, 1412

Algeria concerned over W. Sahara

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria, long a supporter of the Polisario Front in the Western Sahara conflict with Morocco on its southern borders, expressed worry Sunday about renewed fighting there and urged all sides to act responsibly. Without naming either Polisario or Morocco, which says its troops are carrying out mopping up operations against Polisario guerrillas, the Foreign Ministry said the "resurgence of the fratricidal confrontation" would damage the climate needed to end the 16-year-long war there. The war strained relations between Algeria and neighbouring Morocco, now both members of the Arab Maghreb Union, but these were normalised in 1988 and fighting eased the next year. Since then there has been an informal ceasefire. Saying a formal U.N. ceasefire accepted by both sides was to come into effect on Sept. 6, the ministry said Algeria had "registered with profound regret the recent resumed military operations in the western Sahara after a constructive truce... It makes a pressing appeal for the region's evolution towards a future of peace..."

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جordan تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحافية الأردنية الرأي

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

Iraq exempts food importers from tax

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq, "squeezed" by a year-old U.N. trade blockade, Sunday exempted importers of basic food stuffs from paying income tax. The ruling Revolution Command Council decided the exemption should last for one year, an Information Ministry statement said. It covers importers of sugar, flour, rice, oil and other essentials distributed through the government's ration system. Iraq has adopted an ask-no-questions approach to importers, who can buy from wherever they want without declaring the origin of the foreign exchange they use to finance their business. The government says it can provide only around half the basic food needs of the average family through the ration system.

Militiamen kill guerrilla in Lebanon

SIDON, Lebanon (R) — Israeli-backed militiamen killed an Arab guerrilla Sunday inside the Jewish state's "security zone" in South Lebanon, security sources said. They said Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) militiamen hit the guerrilla with machinegun fire when they spotted him in the village of Zoumariya, which leads into the "security zone."

Atlantis lands in Florida

Cape CANAVERAL (AP) — Atlantis swooped through a clear sky and landed in Florida Sunday with five astronauts aboard. The astronauts had released a satellite and spent more than a week in orbit conducting research to benefit future space travellers. The shuttle touched down on Kennedy Space Centre's concrete runway at 8:23 a.m. (1223 GMT). Its arrival was heralded by its signature twin sonic booms. The mission was commanded by John Blaha.

Iran blast follows arsonist attacks

NICOSIA (AP) — A small bomb in the northern Iranian city of Rasht caused some damage to gold shops in the city's main commercial district, but there were no injuries or deaths, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported Sunday. The agency said the explosion in Rasht's main bazaar inflicted damage to about 20 jewellery stores. The blast followed a spate of arsonist attacks in Tehran's bazaar over the past two weeks. Four fires in the capital's bazaar, nerve centre of the city's commercial activity, have panicked merchants, Iranian newspapers have said. The attacks are believed to reflect growing resentment against merchants, who are seen by the public as enriching themselves by driving up already staggering inflation by price gouging and hoarding scarce goods. The merchants financed the 1979 revolution, and have had enjoyed a privileged status since then. But for the first time government officials have started to criticise the bazaars for evading taxes and earning only before becoming richer at the people's expense.

Mubarak discusses BCCI crisis with cabinet members

ALEXANDRIA (AP) — President Hosni Mubarak and his cabinet Sunday discussed the future of the Egyptian affiliate of the troubled Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI). Following the meeting which was attended by Mr. Mubarak, 22 cabinet ministers and several senior banking officials, Information Minister Sayfet Sherif told reporters Mr. Mubarak was briefed on efforts to ensure depositors in the Egyptian affiliate of BCCI received all their savings. Fifty-one per cent of the bank's shares are owned by Egyptian interests and the rest are owned by BCCI. An Egyptian newspaper, Al Messa, reported last Monday that 68,000 depositors in Egypt had placed \$1.2 billion with the bank, \$400 million of which the Bank of England has frozen in BCCI's British branch.

Release of 2 hostages raises hopes for all-out swap deal

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Kidnappers freed two Western hostages Sunday, setting the stage for what could be the end of the kidnap nightmare for foreigners held as political pawns in Lebanon.

While freed American Edward Tracy was being whisked to Damascus to be handed over to diplomats, U.N. Chief Javier Perez de Cuellar received a sealed message carried by former hostage John McCarthy from the kidnappers who held him for five years.

The Islamic Jihad message apparently offers to swap the 10 remaining Western hostages for Arabs held by Israel.

The release of Mr. Tracy, the first American to be freed in 15 months, leaves five Americans, two Britons, two Germans and an Italian in the hands of kidnappers in Lebanon.

A pro-Iranian political source, whose information has proved reliable in the past, told Reuters in Beirut he did not believe there would another release until there had been some sort of action on the letter.

Mr. Tracy, freed in Beirut after

nearly five years in the hands of the Shiite Muslim Revolutionary Justice Organisation, was on his way to Germany on a U.S. air force plane on Sunday night.

He was released a few hours after Frenchman Jerome Leyraud was freed by kidnappers who vainly tried to block the release of any more Westerners after last Thursday's freeing of Mr. McCarthy.

"It makes a man reborn," white-haired Tracy said, struggling for words in a brief interview with Syrian Television shortly after arriving in Damascus.

"I'm really happy to see a tree, hear an airplane, hear an automobile," said Mr. Tracy, looking sunken eyed and gaunt.

Reacting to Mr. Tracy's release, U.S. President George Bush praised Iran and Syria for their help and suggested that Israel and others in the region release "innocents" held for political purposes.

"We call upon the governments with influence on this issue to build on this positive move and work for the release of all hosts."

Mr. Tracy, freed in Beirut after

hostages, regardless of their nationality," Mr. Bush said.

In Damascus, visiting Iranian Interior Minister Abdallah Nouri, called for Western hostages in Lebanon to be freed and said Tehran was doing all it could.

"We oppose, denounce and reject all hostage-taking actions," said Mr. Nouri, who discussed the hostage issue on Saturday with Sheikh Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah, spiritual mentor of Lebanon's Hezbollah (Party of God).

Mr. Perez de Cuellar, emerging with Mr. McCarthy from their meeting, said he had not been able to read the letter directly because it was in Arabic.

"I am not in a position to tell you what is in the letter," he said. "I am going to read very carefully what they say in their letter."

In London, a spokesman for Prime Minister John Major's office said he had sent a message to Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani expressing thanks for Iran's efforts in securing the release of Mr. McCarthy.

Soon after the freeing of Mr. Tracy became public knowledge, Israel appealed to Syria. Iran and

The 34-year-old television

journalist handed the large manila envelope to the U.N. secretary-general at an internationally televised ceremony on the tarmac at the royal air force base at Lyneham, 130 kilometres west of London, where he has been undergoing medical tests out of the public eye.

"It was very important as part of my mission to see the secretary-general and to hand the letter from the kidnappers to him," Mr. McCarthy told reporters after a 40-minute private meeting with Mr. Perez de Cuellar.

"They expressed their total confidence that the secretary-general was the man who could work for their interests and in the interest of humanity to ensure the release of all the hostages in Lebanon and all the prisoners in the region," he said.

"It's a great relief. I know it is in very capable hands, far more capable than mine," he said.

Soon after the freeing of Mr. Tracy became public knowledge, Israel appealed to Syria. Iran and

The 34-year-old television

(Continued on page 5)

U.S. team in Amman work on 'letter of understanding'

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Three U.S. officials charged with drafting written assurances and guarantees on the form and purpose of the Arab-Israeli peace talks arrived here Sunday morning to discuss with Jordanian officials the details of "letters of understanding" which the U.S. will send to concerned parties along with the invitations to the proposed peace conference to be held in October.

A senior Jordanian official confirmed U.S. officials' arrival in Amman but declined comment on the talks until they were finalised.

The team, made up of Aaron Miller from the U.S. State Department, Daniel Kurtzer, deputy assistant of state for Near East affairs, and Edmund Hull of the National Security Council, met with Israeli officials and two

Palestinian leaders in the occupied West Bank before travelling to Jordan.

A U.S. embassy spokesman said the team was in Jordan "to look at unresolved issues."

The Jordanian official, who requested anonymity, told the Jordan Times that Jordan will discuss with the officials "the same principles and ideas which we have been talking about with the Americans since the beginning of the new political efforts to broker a Middle East peace."

He did not detail these "principles and ideas" but the Jordanian leadership has repeatedly said that Jordan was committed to a just and durable peace based on a land for peace formula in accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

Jordan has also stressed Jerusalem's status as occupied Arab territory and insisted on having a representative from East Jeru-

salim within the proposed joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the peace conference.

The three officials arrived in Israel Wednesday and met with Faizal Al Husseini and Hanan Ashrawi to discuss "several unresolved issues which were preventing a final decision on whether Palestinians would attend."

At the end of the meeting Mrs. Ashrawi told reporters that the two sides discussed "assurances and explanations to convince us of American evenhandedness in the peace process."

She declined discussing the details of the seven-hour talks saying only that they involved "procedure, points of substance and policy points."

A senior Palestinian source, quoted by the Jerusalem Post, however, said that talks were "an intensive exchange of views" in

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Arafat: No Arab-Israeli pact possible without Palestinians

PARIS (R) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat said in an interview published Monday Arab countries would not conclude a peace treaty with Israel unless it included guarantees on Palestinian rights and a compromise settlement on Jerusalem.

"I don't think the Arab countries will agree to establish new treaties like those at Camp David, leaving out Palestinian rights and Jerusalem, the Holy City of Islam and Christianity," Mr. Arafat told the French daily *Le Figaro*.

The Camp David accords led to a Egyptian-Israeli treaty in 1979 but failed to bring peace to the Middle East.

Asked if he was worried that Syria would be tempted to make a similar bilateral peace agreement with Israel, the PLO leader said: "I don't think so. Not without Palestinian rights."

Mr. Arafat reiterated his earlier statements that a conference without PLO representation would be an attempt to normalise Arab-Israeli relations but not a real effort for peace.

"It's a new Camp David to normalise relations between Israel and the Arab countries," he said. "With who else but the Palestinians can they make peace? With Qatar or Bahrain? Without us, there won't be

in the composition of the Palestinian delegation whether directly or indirectly."

Asked if this meant Israel rejected talks with a delegation named by the PLO, he said, "Yes."

But he declined to be drawn on whether Israel would boycott a peace conference attended by such a delegation.

The director general of Mr. Shamir's office, Yossi Ben-Aharon, denied Thursday a newspaper report that Israel would boycott such a conference.

Israel has agreed to attend a Middle East peace conference planned for October provided the Palestinian delegation does not contain PLO members or Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem.

The PLO does not insist PLO members take part but says it reserves the right to announce the delegates' names.

Some mediators have suggested an announcement by the PLO should not be an obstacle because in practice Israel would already have approved the delegates it named.

The United States, which would cosponsor the conference with the Soviet Union, says the meeting would pave the way for direct talks between Israel and its Arab neighbours and between Israel and the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

"I say that this is completely untrue," Mr. Pazner said. "We have an understanding with the United States that the PLO will have absolutely no involvement

Kuwait to begin drilling new oilwells in September

Yasser Arafat

been permanently affected by water seeping into wells, they said.

"It will be years before we really know the extent of the damage — but at most we can say it may have knocked off five to 10 years of the reservoir's productive life," one source said.

The source said Kuwait's oil production was running at between 120,000 and 130,000 barrels per day (bpd), mainly from its Maqqa and Burgan fields, because this was the most undamaged crude collection facilities in the desert could hold.

It excludes the estimated daily output of 300,000 bpd from the neutral zone which Kuwait shares with Saudi Arabia.

Kuwait produced two million bpd before Iraq's invasion on Aug. 2 of last year.

The oil sources said all of the wells which produced Kuwait's highest quality crude had blown up, which meant that the blend which was being exported at pre-war rates was inferior to the pre-war crude.

Kuwait resumed oil exports for the first time since the war ended with a two million barrel shipment of crude on July 28.

Kuwait officials said they were hopeful production would increase to 400,000 bpd by the end of the year.

Oil Minister Hamoud Al Rabea said last month the cost of putting out the oilwell fires would be \$1 billion while total damage to the emirate's oil industry, including lost production, could reach \$75 billion.

UNESCO chief in Amman killed, 2 wounded in attack by driver

By Maha Addasi
Special to the Jordan Times

Crown Prince, Ensour denounce killing, offer condolences

HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS Crown Prince Hassan Sunday offered condolences to the Sudanese ambassador to Jordan over the killing of Dr. Khawad, a Sudanese national.

The Crown Prince visited the two UNESCO employees wounded in the attack which killed Dr. Khawad.

The Crown Prince also delegated the deputy director of his office to convey condolences to the family of the deceased, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Foreign Minister Abdallah Ensour meanwhile issued a statement deploiring the killing, which he described as an isolated incident with no political bearings.

Dr. Ensour noted that the possible motive for the killing was related to employment and that the assailant is believed to be deranged and said that "Jordan is a secure and stable country with no record of attacks against any diplomat."

Dr. Ensour expressed the government's deep regret over the killing of Dr. Khawad and offered condolences to the bereaved family.

He described Dr. Khawad as "a great Arab intellectual and a friend of Jordan" and noted that the deceased had extended "great help to developing education and culture in Jordan."

The death of Dr. Khawad is a great loss for Jordan, he added expressing hope that the assailant would be apprehended soon.

Frederico Mayor, director general of UNESCO, also expressed sorrow and regrets over the killing and sent a message of condolence to the Khawad family.

Interior Minister Jawdat Shaboul visited the Sudanese embassy and offered condolences to the ambassador on the death of Dr. Khawad.

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U.S. tops list of biggest arms suppliers to Third World

WASHINGTON (AP) — Weapons sales to the Third World nearly doubled last year, making America the world's top arms supplier, an annual congressional report found.

The growth in U.S. arms sales — from nearly \$8 billion in 1989 to \$18.5 billion in 1990 — was attributed to the Iraqi "threat" in the Gulf and to shrinking Pentagon budgets. These smaller budgets are forcing defence contractors to sell abroad or go under.

Following the meeting which was attended by Mr. Mubarak, 22 cabinet ministers and several senior banking officials, Information Minister Sayfet Sherif told reporters Mr. Mubarak was briefed on efforts to ensure deposits in the Egyptian affiliate of BCCI received all their savings.

For the first time since 1983, the United States ranked at the top of the list of arms suppliers to Third World nations.

It accounted for 44.8 per cent of all weapons agreements, up from 23.6 per cent the previous year,

said the report, written by Richard F. Grimmett, a defence expert.

This data comes as the adminis-

tration is discussing an initiative announced earlier this year by President George Bush to curb weapons sales to the Middle East by the top five suppliers — the United States, the Soviet Union, China, England and

IOM braced for possible fresh flow of evacuees

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Gulf war is over, but the crisis is far from over for many international agencies and organisations involved in efforts to cope with the human side of the situation. Among them is the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), which is maintaining its presence in Jordan to handle the outward flow of third country nationals from Kuwait and Iraq through the Kingdom.

The operations of the Geneva-based IOM, which handled the repatriation of over 170,000 expatriates from Kuwait and Iraq through Jordan and 36,000 through other neighbouring countries since the Aug. 2, 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, have become all the more essential in view of the de facto Kuwaiti expulsion of expatriates following the liberation of the emirate in late February.

(The figures do not include the 750,000 plus third country nationals who transited overland through Jordan since Aug. 2 under repatriation arrangements undertaken by their respective governments).

The League of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is expecting at least

50,000 expatriates to leave Kuwait through Iraq, but there is no clear indication yet how many of them might need IOM help. A good part of them is expected to be Jordanians and Palestinians who may not require help per se, but the IOM "is keeping its doors open for those who might stand in need of assistance," said Antonios Tsakiris, chief of the Amman mission of IOM.

"There is an increase in the number of third country nationals who are leaving Kuwait through Iraq and Jordan after their employment contracts expire," he noted. "We don't know yet whether this trend will continue, but we are prepared to step in wherever we are needed."

While the number of Asians — Sri Lankans, Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, Indians and Philipines — repatriated in the past two months are relatively insignificant, there is a marked increase of Yemenis and Sudanese seeking IOM help to go home, Mr. Tsakiris told the Jordan Times.

The total number of IOM repatriations was close to 300 since June 1, a majority of them Sudanese and Yemenis, he said.

In anticipation of the expected wave of requests for help, IOM has opened an

office in Baghdad. "Right now we are arranging the passage home for about 250 Sudanese and 40 Yemenis who arrived in Iraq from Kuwait," said Mr. Tsakiris, a Greek.

"For the moment, we have enough funds to handle the flow, but if there is any significant increase in number then we may have to appeal for additional international financial aid," he added.

IOM has received close to \$74 million — most of it in government contributions and the rest in private donations — since the beginning of its operations related to the Gulf crisis, including the return inland transport of over 338,000 Iraqi Kurds from Turkish and Iranian border areas where they fled after a failed rebellion against the government in March.

All the major donors had transferred funds directly to the IOM, which, in coordination with the United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO), handled the repatriation process.

Almost all of the funds have already been spent or committed by IOM, which now says it needs \$8.1 million more to meet its estimated requirements until Aug. 31.

For the IOM, an inter-governmental agency which



At one point during the Gulf evicene crisis, tens of thousands of third country nationals were stranded in the desert on the Iraqi-Jordanian border (File photo)

routinely handles cross-border migration of people, the Gulf crisis operations represented "emergency programmes."

Although there is no press ure of evacuee flow on Jordan at the moment, the Kingdom might face heavy demands on its facilities if another wave of evacuees hits the Kingdom, which, at the peak of the Gulf crisis, found itself on the receiving end of tens of thousands of third country nationals fleeing Kuwait and Iraq every day.

Most of the arrivals are directly taken to the airport to

stuck in the Kingdom for at least one week, awaiting flights home arranged by their governments. The Jordanian government, hard put to meet the needs of those already in Jordan, had to close the border crossing with Iraq to stem the flow.

Since the establishment of the IOM office in Baghdad, the average duration of stay in Jordan of third country evacuees from Kuwait and Iraq is less than 12 hours.

Most of the arrivals are

board pre-arranged flights. Mr. Tsakiris said. But he added, if the number of evacuees goes up then IOM will have to seek Jordanian help and facilities for their overnight stay in the Kingdom. "We do not yet know the scope of the situation," said Mr. Tsakiris. Even the concerned governments of the expatriates, as represented by diplomatic missions in the region, are unable to provide a "clear picture" of how many people might be forced to leave Kuwait through Iraq, he added.

Kuwaitis' working habits slow to change following Gulf war

KUWAIT CITY (AP) — During the Iraqi occupation, long-pampered Kuwaitis were forced to fend for themselves.

They delivered food, drove ambulances, baked bread, smuggled weapons to attack Iraqi troops, even collected garbage.

But speculation that the Gulf war experience would lead to a new Kuwaiti work ethic has diminished with each Egyptian and Asian guest worker brought in since the war.

"I don't think the problem is with the people," said economist Jasem Al Sadoun. "In the old days, Kuwaitis were fishermen, pearl merchants, traders. Fifteen — or 16-hour days were the norm."

He says the country's 600,000 Kuwaiti nationals have been spoiled by black gold — oil.

Some 70 per cent of Kuwaiti

workers have government jobs, financed by pre-war oil income exceeding \$10 billion a year and earnings equal that from foreign investments. Even those in private industry rely on government contracts and government credit.

"Since oil was discovered in the 1940s, everybody has been given a job and nobody asks what he does," Mr. Sadoun said. "Even in the United States, people would be willing to sit in offices, doing nothing but waiting for their checks at the end of the month."

There has been some belt-tightening in the wake of the seven-month Iraqi occupation, ended by the allied forces Feb. 26.

More than 730 of Kuwait's oil wells were blown up in the war, cutting oil production to a fraction of pre-war levels. Ministries

were burned, offices and stores trashed. The country has announced it must borrow money abroad to fund many reconstruction projects.

The austerity measures, however, have been felt mainly by the non-Kuwaiti workforce.

Before the war, Kuwaitis were a minority in their own country, served by an army of some 1.6 million Palestinians, stateless Arab bidouns and foreign nationals. The government now hopes to limit the number of outsiders to about 800,000.

Around 180,000 guest workers have been brought in to labour on reconstruction projects, sweep the streets, run hotels, clean houses and manage restaurants.

Financially, Kuwaitis do not need to pursue menial jobs.

The government gave special

bonuses of \$1,600 to the 200,000 Kuwaitis who stayed in the emirate during the Iraqi occupation.

Government salaries were paid retroactively to Aug. 2, 1990, the date of the invasion, whether a Kuwaiti worked or not.

Some \$4 billion in personal and housing loans also have been forgiven. And now the government is considering \$65,000 payment per family to compensate for war damages and suffering.

Kuwaitis also face social pressure against working, which is considered undignified.

Abdul Mohsen, 40, a postal clerk, was turned down for a job outside the government because he is Kuwaiti.

But councilman Jawad Al Matrouk argued Kuwaitis were toughened by their experiences during the Gulf war.

"We thank the minister for being so frank, but as far as it

"They told me, 'you don't want to work in a restaurant. It's long hours, hard work. You have to work on holiday.'"

All the restaurant jobs went to Egyptians, Abdul Mohsen said.

The Gulf war spurred debate last week in the National Council, an advisory body to the cabinet, on the subject of working.

"I don't accept the idea that Kuwaiti should work as a garbage collector or street sweeper or any such occupation, unless maybe he quit school after third grade," Kuwait's minister of planning, Ahmad Al Jassar, told the assembly.

But councilman Jawad Al Matrouk argued Kuwaitis were toughened by their experiences during the Gulf war.

"We learned a lesson," he said.

"We must work hard, do things for ourselves. We should change. Life is to work, to do something constructive."

occupations go, the Kuwaiti youth have proved that they can put up with anything — and will be honoured to work as garbage collectors," he said.

There are no Kuwaiti garbage collectors. But Young Kuwaitis say they are more willing than their parents to get their hands dirty with work.

Walid Al Awadi, 25, a civil engineering graduate, wrote a neighbourhood newsletter during the occupation and helped distribute money, food and weapons.

He now works at a media centre that examines the occupation through art shows, videos and lectures.

"We learned a lesson," he said.

"We must work hard, do things for ourselves. We should change. Life is to work, to do something constructive."

Soviet Afghan envoy opens talks in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (R) — A senior Soviet envoy opened talks with Pakistani officials Sunday aimed at pushing forward efforts to find a political settlement to the 13-year-old Afghan civil war.

A Soviet delegation led by Afghan expert Nikolai Kozyrev immediately went into talks with Pakistani Foreign Ministry officials and later was to call on Prime Minister Gulam Ishaq Khan, a government spokesman said.

Mr. Kozyrev, who led the Soviet delegation that negotiated the Geneva accords in 1988 that led to the withdrawal of all Soviet troops in Afghanistan, will meet Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif Monday.

He may also meet some of the Mujahedeen fighters based in Pakistan, but Mujahedeen sources said they were waiting for details.

"I think it would be natural if there is a meeting. They are here and we are here and the main topic of the visit is Afghanistan," said one guerrilla official.

The Mujahedeen would prefer to talk to the Soviet Union instead of the Soviet-backed gov-

ernment in Kabul because they believe Moscow holds the key to peace in Afghanistan.

Mr. Kozyrev is the most senior Soviet official to visit Pakistan since former Foreign Minister Edward Shevardnadze came in 1989.

Previous talks between Paki stan and the Soviet Union in Moscow in May failed to reach any breakthrough on what should happen to Afghan President Najibullah.

Pakistan switched the emphasis of its Afghan policy earlier this year from directly aiding the Mu jahedeen groups with weapons and logistical help towards seeking a political solution.

But it officially remains adamant that Mr. Najibullah can play no role in any transitional administration that would take power in Kabul if agreement could be reached on a United Nations peace plan.

The Soviet Union originally proposed the Kozyrev visit at the beginning of the year but scrapped its plans after guerrillas took a major Afghan garrison in eastern Afghanistan.

Sole Tehran daily joyful over Bakhtiar's murder

TEHRAN (R) — Several Iranian newspapers Sunday denounced the killing of former Prime Minister Shapour Bakhtiar outside Paris as an attempt to strangle Iran-France relations.

The hardline Jahan-e Eslam was alone in expressing joy over the assassination of the late Shah's last premier, found at his home Thursday with his throat slit with a kitchen knife.

"Whatever the incentives behind it, destruction of elements such as Bakhtiar gladdens the nation and the suffering families of martyrs," the paper said in an editorial.

"Explaining Iran's position on terrorism should not become a ground for condemnation of assassination of infamous elements," it added.

Iran's Ambassador in Paris Ali Ahani, summoned to the French foreign ministry Friday over the murder, condemned all acts of terrorism and denied any involvement by Tehran.

"Iran should expect some kind of impediment every time it tries to lay the foundation of a meaningful long-run relationship with a major European country," the English-language Kayhan International said.

Arab newspaper said Saturday the United States, unhappy with the rapid growth of Tehran's ties with Paris, stood to gain from Mr. Bakhtiar's killing.

"Iran should expect some kind of impediment every time it tries to lay the foundation of a meaningful long-run relationship with a major European country," the English-language Kayhan International said.

Mr. Bakhtiar, 76, served as premier for five weeks before Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's Islamic revolution toppled the monarchy in 1979. He then fled to France, leading a faction in

the Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541; Armenian Church Tel. 623833, Tel. 623543; Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 711331; Aramean Orthodox Church Tel. 775261; Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751; Armenian International Church Tel. 65376; Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295; The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 823824, 654932; Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Slight increase in temperatures will take place and winds will be north-westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

AMMAN: Dr. Mahmud Abu Haja (—) Min./max. temp. 17 / 31; Al Sharqia' pharmacy 27/32; Zarqa: Dr. Maysoon Hanna (—) 24 / 37; Jordan Valley 20 / 36; Khatibah pharmacy 28/34; Jordan Electricity Authority 28/36.

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111; Civil Defence Department 661111; Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341; Civil Defence Emergency 199; Rescue Police 192, 621111, 623777; Fire Department 623299; Blood Bank 75121; Highway Police 843402; Traffic Police 896390; Public Security Department 630321; Hotel Complaints 605800; Petrol Complaints 661176; Water and Sewerage Repairs 677467; Amman Municipality Complaints 787111; Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121; Overseas Calls 010230; Central Amman Telephone Repair 623101; Albad Telephone Repairs 661101; Jordan Electricity Authority 623201; Radio Jordan 773111; Radio Jordan 774111; Water Authority 680100; Jordan Electricity Authority 815615.

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Indonesian official tours social development centre

AMMAN (J.T.) — On the third day of his visit to Jordan, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, accompanied by his wife and Jordanian officials, visited social development centres in Madaba and Ma'an districts south of here and inspected their activities.

The two centres are operated by the Queen Alia Social Welfare Fund (QAF), which runs various types of projects in the rural and urban regions designed to prompt the contribution of women in socio-economic development.

The minister and his wife inspected vocational training workshops for girls, the kindergarten at Madaba Centre and were briefed by QAF and centre officials on the programmes and activities that benefit the local community.

The centre, they said, contributes most beneficially towards the development of the local community by providing training in various trades and offering facilities for cultural development and recreational activities.

The two guests toured the "rural market," which displays and sells products of the so-called "home gardens" created within QAF's Programme of Rural De-

velopment that encourages women and housewives to develop the so-called village planting of vegetables and fruit.

They were also briefed on the types of training programmes they receive and the skills they use in their activities.

At the Ma'an Social Develop-

ment Centre, the two guests inspected the traditional rugs produced by local women. They were told that wool used in the industry was bought locally from the sheep farmers and that the project was designed to help local families improve their living standards by acquiring more income and involving the rural girls in useful work.

According to QAF, 35 per cent of the population of Jordan lives in rural areas. QAF has concentrated on developing social services in these areas and in meeting the needs of the inhabitants of these areas.

Accompanying the two distin-

guished guests on the tour were the wife of Foreign Minister Abdullah Ensour, the district governor, mayors and heads of local social organisations in the two areas.

Jordan to develop natural gas reserves

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan pos-

sesses 40 billion tonnes of oil shale in its reserves that can pro-

duce four billion tonnes of crude oil, according to Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Thabet Al Taher.

Only financial consideration have so far impeded the full exploitation of the shale to produce oil. To do so, entails setting up pilot stations for the treatment of oil shales, he said.

The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources is currently revising its oil exploration programme and is contemplating setting up a national oil exploration firm. Mr. Taher said in a recent television interview.

The minister said prospecting for natural gas is going on as Jordan is known to have a reserve of 400 billion cubic feet of natural gas. Despite this reserve, the country last year produced only 5.5 billion cubic feet of natural gas.

Also interviewed by Jordan Television, the director general of the Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA), Mohammad Arafah, said that the company has saved 250,000 tonnes of heavy fuel worth \$20 million by utilising

natural gas found at Aj Rishieh fields not far from the Iraqi border to generate electricity.

The JEA is conducting a study to see how it can depend more on the natural gas to reduce the country's oil dependency. Heavy oil is used to drive power generators but the JEA is now gradually using natural gas found at Aj Rishieh to generate electric power.

Head of the Jordan Natural Resources Authority (NRA) Kamal Jreisat said that the NRA has drilled 66 wells to explore for oil and has discovered only a small well.

Several foreign oil companies have now concluded their search operations in Jordan but that does not mean that the oil exploration operations will stop, Mr. Jreisat, said. Indeed, the Jordanian government has recently received several bids from foreign oil firms to prospect for oil and is now examining those bids, he said.

He added that the discovery of more natural gas reserves is possible but the NRA has high hopes to raise the country's gas reserves to 1000 billion cubic feet. Once that level is reached, he said it would be possible to supply industrial centres with piped gas.

Officials inspect repair work on facilities damaged by storms

AMMAN (J.T.) — Three cabinet ministers Monday will tour the southern regions of Jordan to inspect districts that had sustained damages from the winter storms in March and to examine the ongoing repair work on various installations.

Deputy Prime Minister Ali Subehimat will be accompanied on the tour by Minister of Tourism Abdul Karim Al Kabariti and Minister of Public Works and Housing Saad Hayel Srour to discuss with local officials the progress of repair work on bridges, roads, culverts and other facilities damaged in the winter storms.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that the ministers want to ensure that the construction and repair work was proceeding on schedule, that sufficient funds were available for the work and that there were funds for new projects in the coming year. The project planned for the southern districts are to be carried out by the ministries of Public Works and Housing and Tourism, which concern urban and rural development and problems related to the Aqaba region.

The government last April allocated JD 1 million for the repair of the areas damaged by the

storms following a comprehensive report compiled by then Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh. A great deal of damage to the farm lands and the agricultural infrastructure was caused by the storms, prompting the government to take speedy action.

Apart from the affected regions, the three ministers are expected to visit Wadi Mousa to inspect tourist facilities at the ancient Nabatean city of Petra in preparation for the coming tourist season, according to Petra.

Tourism Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti told Petra that his ministry was currently implementing a wide scale awareness campaign through tourist and travel offices to facilitate the arrival in Jordan by various tourists.

The Ministry of Tourism, he said, is currently working out a national plan for marketing Jordan abroad and training personnel on tourism-related skills. The ministry is cooperating with the Ministry of Education in promoting hotel management courses so as to turn out badly needed personnel with special skills for the tourism industry. Mr. Kabariti said.

Government to consider student requests for bachelor's degrees

AMMAN (J.T.) — Reacting to a question by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the minister said he has issued instructions to the concerned departments at his ministry to arrange for a meeting with the students' request of transforming the schools into full fledged colleges awarding the graduates bachelor's degrees.

Reports in the local press had said that the students had refused to take the comprehensive examination along with students from other community colleges because their courses last for four years like university courses.

In reply to a question by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the minister said he has issued instructions to the concerned departments at his ministry to arrange for a meeting with the students' request of transforming the schools into full fledged colleges awarding the graduates bachelor's degrees.

He said that a delegation of students from the two schools will meet with the minister to discuss the question in detail in the hope of reaching a solution to the problem.

The two nursing schools award diplomas in nursing and midwifery following four academic years of attendance.

Experts reexamining idea of making Aqaba free trade zone

By Nur Sati
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Whether or not to convert Aqaba into a free zone or not has been a much talked about subject ever since 1968, when various experts brought the idea out in the open. So far, it has been left at just that — an idea.

Earlier this month, however, the debate crept up at a meeting hosted by the Sawt Al-Shaab. The purpose was to reinforce the idea and look closely at the pros and cons, especially since the state of the economy demands urgent attention.

Nine experts from different sectors attended the meeting. Although the subject needs deeper probing, most of the participants were for the idea of making Jordan attractive for foreign investors, according to Sami Gano, chairman and director of Sawt Al Shab.

Some participants argued that if the infrastructure is overhauled, then a free zone can be formed anywhere.

The first step would be to develop the mentality and administrative bureaucracy, procedures, services and infrastructures," Ibraheem Badran, secretary general of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, said at the meeting.

The proper environment for investors will be set, he said. "Thereafter, there would be no problem in deciding whether the free zone should be in Aqaba, Sahab or Zarka," he added.

Others pointed specifically towards Aqaba.

But in order for Aqaba to flourish in attracting investors, there is a need for deregulation. "If we want to progress, we have to reduce administrative complications," Mr. Gano said.

Fahed Al Fanek, economic analyst and a member of the Economic Consultative Committee, disagreed about the idea of having a free zone at all.

When Jordan exports from a free zone, "international regula-

tions say that we cannot get a certificate of origin. What is the use?" he asked.

In other words, anyone is free to manufacture products in the free zone and there will be a tendency to lose income because while the rest of Jordan pays full price," Dr. Gano said.

Free zones, he added, are namely made where there is cheap labour. Aqaba is no such place, he said. "Why should we create jobs where they are not wanted."

"The idea is to liberalise the economy and make it attractive for outside investors," Mr. Gano said.

Instead of manufacturing the products in Japan, a company in that country can establish a subsidiary in the free trade zone where its products can be manufactured, creating jobs for the local economy.

"We can use and train our people to assemble the products. Thus save money on transport, labour and at the same time take advantage of being in the center of the region to supply the area," he said.

Another reason Dr. Fanek disagrees with the free zone is because "the present investment laws make all of Jordan a free zone."

The Encouragement of Investment Law exempts certain projects from taxes and fees. To be exempted, it has to be an approved economical project in the areas of industry and mining, agriculture and livestock, tourism and hotels, shipping, hospitals or education. The law divides Jordan into development sectors, giving each section a certain number of years (from seven to 12 years) to be exempted from the taxes and fees.

An expert, who preferred anonymity, said: "While this law helps many projects, provided they comply with the law, it does put some restrictions."

Under a free zone, any project can be launched and one does not have to comply with the invest-

ment law requirements, he explained.

"There is no reason to allow the population of Aqaba to consume products free of charge while the rest of Jordan pays full price," Dr. Gano said.

But Mr. Gano disagreed, pointing out that the rest of Jordan would benefit from increased investments in Aqaba.

"This is not a major issue," Mr. Gano said. "We wish that Aqaba would get everything free. Jordan everywhere else can take advantage of receiving the products at less cost."

"The income of the people in Aqaba will reflect on the economy," he said. "We are looking for opportunities for the unemployed. I do not think we should look at this situation from this microlevel."

The most important element during the debate was the issue of infrastructure.

"The subject needs detailed study and modernisation of infrastructure in Aqaba as well as the development of marketing to ensure that it is a point of massive attraction," said Mohammad Asfour, chairman of the Jordan Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Gano said that potential investors will first look at the area's infrastructure, regardless of any other incentives it may offer.

"We have to update our infrastructure and make it attractive because none will move to the area when there are no facilities. We cannot depend on our local savings and investments."

He cited Taiwan, Korea and Singapore as examples.

These countries made their breakthrough economically simply by inviting foreign investors and making the climate suitable for them, he said.

But Dr. Fanek, continuing to express reservations over the creation of such a zone, pointed to possible negative implications.

"The only thing that will come out of it is more services, smuggling and re-export, which will not benefit the economy," he said.

Some participants questioned whether the latest round of talks will lead to any action since similar discussions have been held in previous years. Others, however, believed that "the proper authorities are considering the idea."

Jordan continuing to struggle with Iraqi influx and strain on country

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Half of the 130,000 Iraqis in Jordan are expected to return home after a holiday while the others will remain in the Kingdom on business, awaiting visas to go abroad or until they decide on future plans, according to officials.

An official, confirming the figure of 130,000, said that the 270,000 Jordanians and Palestinians who have returned from Kuwait and other Gulf states, has placed heavy strains on the Jordanian infrastructure and services. The official hinted that Jordan might seek international help if the situation remained static for another two months.

"On the one hand," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, "the visit of Iraqis is highly positive to the Jordanian economy since our tourism and related facilities are fully engaged."

On the other hand, said the official, Jordan's water services are stretched thin, and the visitors also consume part of government-subsidised essential commodities.

"As of today, we have 130,000 Iraqis in the Kingdom and we believe that about 50 per cent of them can be classified as pure tourists or businessmen," said the official in an interview Saturday.

"Others fall into three categories: the first category is people passing through, the second includes those awaiting visas and the third category includes those who appear undecided of their plans."

According to the official, an average 1,500 Iraqis cross the border into Jordan every day. The official did not have statistics related to Iraqis flying out of Jordan for third countries.

Close to 200,000 Iraqis have entered Jordan across the border since mid-May when the Iraqi government lifted a travel ban on non-official Iraqis.

"Unless we can balance the number of incoming and outgoing Iraqis visiting Jordan are believed to have sufficient funds to pay for their

going visitors in the next two months, we might have to seek international help," the official said.

Asked how Jordan could seek international assistance to handle the wave of "tourists," the official pointed out that the Kingdom is having difficulty coping with its people who have returned from Kuwait and the Gulf states.

"We have to see the high number of Iraqis here against the backdrop of the dramatic rise in our own population as a result of the returning expatriates," the official said. "There are additional demands on every phase of our infrastructure — water supply, hospitals, schools and other facilities."

Water and Irrigation Minister Samir Kawar said this week that the authorities had to make extra provisions to meet the rising water demand.

Jawad Anani, an economic analyst and former minister, commented that "to a large extent it is a situation similar to that of 1967," recalling that the Arab-Israeli war of that year had forced out hundreds of thousands of West Bankers into Jordan and the international community had stepped in to help the Kingdom handle the refugee situation.

His Majesty Hussein has referred to the influx of expatriates as "the third wave" of Palestinian exodus and underlined the moral responsibility of other countries of the region to shoulder part of the burden.

According to the senior official, no Iraqi national has applied for political asylum in Jordan. But many have sought help from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to find political asylum in the West — Europe and North America.

Dozens of Iraqis crowd around the UNHCR offices in Shmeisani everyday, seeking to file their applications or awaiting word on already submitted asylum requests.

Most of the Iraqis visiting Jordan are believed to have sufficient funds to pay for their

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Labour minister visiting Iraq

AMMAN (Petra) — Labour Minister Abdul Karim Al Dughmi Sunday started a four day visit to Iraq at the invitation of his Iraqi counterpart, Omid Midhat, to discuss labour-related issues of mutual concern to Jordan and Iraq. The two ministers are expected to discuss means of boosting Jordanian-Iraqi cooperation in labour matters at international and regional conferences. Mr. Dughmi is to visit a number of unions and inspect workers achievements in a number of areas.

Lower House committees to meet

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament's Legal Committee will hold a meeting today to resume discussion of an amendment to the State Security Law for 1991 and the Higher Court of Justice Temporary Law roll for 1989. The House's Financial Committee will meet the same day to discuss supply laws. Both committees at the House are scheduled to hold a joint meeting the same day to discuss the Jordanian Investment Corporation Law.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition of traditional embroideries and hand-made items at the Jordan Intercontinental Hotel.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Rihab Al Namary at the Royal Cultural Centre.

SINCERE CONDOLENCES

The director general of UNESCO and the staff of the Regional Office for Education in the Arab States (UNEDBAS) express their great distress and shock of the sudden and tragic death of

Dr. HAMID MOHAMMAD AL KHAWAD
DIRECTOR A. I. UNEDBAS

who passed away on Sunday August 11, 1991. A register of condolences will be available at UNEDBAS office, Wadi Saqra St. Amman. The director general of UNESCO and the staff of UNEDBAS extend their deepest sympathy and their sincere condolences to his wife and children. Dr. Hamid Al Khawad was one of UNESCO's most highly respected colleagues and an extremely competent international civil servant.

His exemplary services were highly appreciated both as architect and as acting director of the UNESCO office in Amman.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:
MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:
Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.
Telephones: 667171/6, 670144-14
Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO
Facsimile: 661242

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

Sanity above all

IF THE world has been unable to understand the plight of the Palestinians, then Kuwait is a good place to start telling their story. Several hundred thousands of Palestinians had spent their youth and energy for 40 years, building that country: its oil industry, infrastructure and even palaces for its rulers. Up to three generations of Palestinians had lived and worked there and knew no other country they could call home. After Iraq invaded and annexed Kuwait and when the Iraqi leadership called for linkage between the occupation of Kuwait and that of the West Bank and Gaza, most Palestinians living in the emirate had little choice on what position they could take. But after Kuwait was freed the Kuwaitis, outraged by what the Iraqis had done, started to take revenge on the Palestinians for no good reason at all. The Palestinians are now fleeing Kuwait, leaving a legacy of a lifetime only to escape the vengeance of an arrogant mob gone berserk. Destination for most naturally was Jordan, the only country in the Arab World that gave them full citizenship rights, even though many of them did not live here before. But Jordan is also being castigated by its Arab "brothers," mainly because the Kingdom stood against the destruction of Iraq and humiliation of the Arabs.

Now, this is the Palestinians' third major exodus: The first was in 1948 and the second in 1967. Since the beginning of the Gulf crisis close to half a million people have been added to an infrastructure originally designed for three million people.

Needless to say Jordan can hardly cope with such an influx of people that includes also more than 100,000 Iraqis, without help from others. The demographic change is causing severe imbalances in the services the state provides and is straining the country's already limited capabilities in housing, water and other sectors.

If there is fairness to the Palestinians and Jordan, the world, and especially the oil-rich Gulf states, paramount among them Kuwait itself, must pay their dues for repatriating those Palestinians. Jordan has already paid for the blunders and obstinacy of others during the Gulf crisis and cannot and should not pay what it cannot afford.

Palestinians and Jordanians have had enough abuse from brothers and friends. It is high time that sanity prevailed in the domains of the Arab World.



ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

JORDANIAN dailies Sunday focused attention on the 39th anniversary of His Majesty King Hussein's accession to the throne and said that it is a happy occasion for the Jordanian family which takes pride in its leadership and the Kingdom's accomplishments. Al Ra'i daily said that the King had successfully led his people towards democracy, stability and security in a turbulent region exposed to various dangers and challenges. The paper said that on this anniversary the Jordanian people could only take a pledge to pursue the march under the Hashemite leadership, preserve the national unity and work to enhance democracy and stability. The 39th accession anniversary is only one more bright candle lighting the long and arduous path towards achieving further successes for Jordan, the paper said. We are all invited to bolster the national unity at this critical stage in Arab history and shoulder the responsibility of working constructively and courageously under the King's leadership to achieve the future generations' aspirations, said the paper. It said that Jordan should set a good example for other countries in every domain and endeavour and under the leadership of King Hussein it can and must pursue the path towards fulfilling the requirements of democracy in every field.

A columnist in Sawt Al Shaab daily stressed the need for the U.S. and Israel to recognise the rights of all Muslims in the Holy City of Jerusalem. There are American and Arab suspect attempts to respond to the Zionist and American desires of excluding the city of Jerusalem from the coming peace negotiations or from any talks on a Middle East settlement, said Arafat Hijazi. The writer said that it should be emphasised that the city is holy not only for the Arabs but also for hundreds of millions of people around the world. The Camp David accord excluded any mention of Jerusalem or the Palestinian people's rights and focused attention on the future of Sinai which returned to Egypt, he said. He said that by deceiving Egypt's Sadat into accepting the Camp David accord, the U.S. and Israel have secured tacit agreement from Cairo to go ahead with plans to build settlements in the Gaza Strip and other Palestinian lands to absorb Jews from Africa and the Soviet Union. The writer said that Jerusalem remained a symbol of peace for all religions, but it is also the core of the conflict in the region and therefore any solution to the Middle East conflict should take into account the status of Jerusalem otherwise there is no need for the coming negotiations.

Weekly Political Pulse

Talks may fall short of dreams, but better than nothing

NO MATTER what explanations or justifications are offered, this time the Palestinians are destined to accept much less than what was offered them in the context of the Camp David accords. All indications suggest that the Palestinians are persuaded to proceed to the peace conference on the basis of what they had been presented with more than a decade ago by the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty but not quite as much or the same. Of course the bargaining power of the Palestinians and the Arab side as a whole has deteriorated considerably since the late seventies when former U.S. President Jimmy Carter brokered the peace treaty between Cain and Tel Aviv and offered the Palestinians autonomy instead of complete statehood. It was thought then that statehood and independence were within reach so why settle for something less, like autonomy. The problem was, as it always is that no one took into account the possibility of something as awful as the Gulf crisis occurring. Also the Arab side was biting more than it could chew by insisting on the right thing to do without furnishing the mechanism to do just that.

The intifada also contributed to some resurgence of confidence among the Palestinians in the occupied territories and this in turn lead to the belief that if only the Palestinian insurgency could continue, everything would fall into place. Of course none of this has happened and now the Palestinians are confronted with a no-win situation: either to boycott the peace talks and lose by default or participate and get what they could have gotten in the first place, more than ten years ago.

On balance the cards are stacked against the Palestine

Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Palestinian side. They have no choice but to try to salvage what they can by opting to stay out and continue the uprising without effective Arab support, the chances for salvaging anything would decrease considerably. Since the Palestinian signature on any accord carries with it historic implications that could bind future Palestinian generations, the Palestinian side may wish to consider the alternative of staying aloof from the negotiations altogether, but do nothing to sabotage or impede the negotiations on their behalf by whoever, comes forward for that purpose.

If autonomy is the most Palestinians may now sensibly dream about, and that falls short of their national dreams, then why not try for an interim solution through an Arab country that may be much better than the status quo but much worse than what the Palestinians have always dreamt of: a state of their own?

No wonder U.S. Secretary of State James Baker worked days and nights to have the Palestinians on board the peace process train. He seeks an all time solution that can never be questioned by future generations of Palestinians. Only by having the Palestinians join the talks, would there be assurances that the Palestinian case is dealt with for good. Since the Israelis are not so eager to talk to the Palestinians neither, then why not keep the Palestinians out of the fray? No wonder the Palestinian leadership is having a difficult time deciding what to do. Either way they take is fraught with danger and they know this very well having been bitten many times in the past.

Palestinian leader Faisal Husseini has already been threatened

for no reason other than talking with Mr. Baker. Can one imagine what will happen to him, and like-minded people if they join the talks in earnest and then find out that they would have to make binding agreements with their enemy? The internecine fighting that will surely ensue among the Palestinian forces as result of the onset of the peace negotiations can be expected to be so severe and horrendous that few have dared to reflect on it yet. Some even suggested that blood will rise to the knees when the Palestinians join the negotiations for final settlements of their situations. Maybe not. But one thing is sure: the people on the West Bank have yet to reconcile themselves to the fact that they are asked to make many concessions and accept something that is even less than the Camp David agreements.

The national psychology in the West Bank is still so charged with hopes and dreams that it is ill-prepared for concessions that would touch upon their sense of statehood and independence. It is doubtful that the Arab capital around the West Bank still has some leverage to shape public opinion there. By and large the Palestinians in the occupied territories have been left on their own with the exception of Jordan which maintained channels of support despite of the decision to break all legal and administrative ties with the West Bank. As for the other Arab states, they have a near zero influence there as far as one can detect. The PLO itself still has tremendous clout in the occupied territories but it too must be weary lest it loses all since the linkage is now wearing thin. Altogether, to commence the peace talks will be much easier than to maintain them or have them succeed.

occupied territories within a single Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

Mr. Shamir, however, is insisting on the right to veto every individual Palestinian representative before committing his country to attend the conference. One school of thought maintains that precisely because of his impeccable right-wing credentials. Mr. Shamir is well-placed to deliver peace with the Arabs. Israel's one and so far only peace agreement with the Arabs, the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty of 1979, it is recalled, was achieved not by the Labour Party but by Menachem Begin who preceded Mr. Shamir as leader of the right-wing Likud Party. America should therefore work with Mr. Shamir.

The second school of thought maintains that Mr. Shamir himself is the greatest obstacle because his ideological commitment to Greater Israel would rule our territorial compromise. Mr. Shamir is a hopeless case as far as the Palestinian issue is concerned. A solution to the Palestinian problem would therefore only become possible if he were replaced by a more moderate leader — and some would like to see America prepare the ground for such a change.

Whatever his views on Mr. Shamir, James Baker, the U.S. secretary of state, could have hardly been more accommodating towards Israel — at least until now. It is the Israelis who for years have been telling America that a settlement of the dispute between themselves and the Palestinians would not pacify the region unless accompanied by the ending of the state of war between Israel and her neighbours. It was Israel which suggested a twin track approach to negotiations, a Palestinian track and an Arab track, and Mr. Baker adopted this as the basis for all his efforts to revive the peace process.

In the course of five visits to the Middle East since the ending of the Gulf war, Mr. Baker obtained Palestinian and Arab agreement to the initiation of peace talks largely on Israel's terms. Initially, the Arabs wanted an international conference under U.N. auspices and with active EC participation to work out a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute on the basis of U.N. resolutions 242 and 338. Mr. Shamir, however, has made it equally clear that he regards the West Bank as an inalienable part of the "land of Israel" and that he is opposed to the exchange of territory for peace. So even if the procedural hurdles are cleared, a solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute and to the Palestinian problem that lies at the heart of this dispute would be exceedingly difficult.

Mr. Shamir and his government colleagues are not impressed by the growing signs of Arab moderation and evince little interest in confidence building measures designed to improve the climate for negotiations. Thus they rejected out of hand the Egyptian proposal, supported by Saudi Arabia and Jordan, to end the Arab economic boycott on Israel in return for a suspension of Jewish settlement in the occupied territories. Jerusalem is bristling with suspicion that the Americans have reached a secret understanding with the Arabs.

While the mood of the government, the most right-wing government in Israel's history, is one of intransigence and defiance, the Israeli people are much more willing to trade land for peace. It is generally understood that Israel's relations with America will suffer if Israel alone is seen as the spoiler of America's efforts to promote peace in the Middle East. For the 76-year-old Shamir the moment of truth is fast approaching because his ideological commitment to "Greater Israel" can no longer be reconciled with Israel's long term interests in good relations with America or peaceful co-existence with Arabs and Palestinians. If Mr. Shamir chooses "Greater Israel," the second school of thought in Washington makes it that much easier for Jordan to follow suit. The PLO, weakened by its association with President Saddam during the Gulf war, has also agreed that the Palestinian side would be represented by leaders from the

Obstacles may still block road for U.S. peace initiative

By Carol Giacomo
Reuter

WASHINGTON — A political cartoon that greeted James Baker in Algeria underscored Arab suspicions of the U.S.-Soviet Middle East peace initiative and suggested problems could still block the prospective Arab-Israeli conference.

The cartoon in the daily newspaper *Quotidien d'Algérie* showed the U.S. secretary of state at a lectern masterfully expounding on the virtues of peace — and standing on a supporting pile of Arabs in traditional head-dresses.

Mr. Baker's efforts to convene a Middle East peace conference, with Moscow's blessing, gained momentum last week with Israel's qualified agreement to attend and with positive soundings from Palestinians, the Palestine Liberation Organisation and their allies.

But the Algerian cartoon, which Mr. Baker might have seen on Monday when he stopped to drum up support for the initiative, summarised the misgivings of Arab World doubters and provided a reminder that much can still happen to undermine prospects for what would be a historic peace conference.

In addition, U.S. officials worry that one violent incident embroiling Arabs and Jews could poison the atmosphere enough to stall the peace process indefinitely.

In any case, it seems clear the way to peace is not fully mapped out. U.S. officials say they have not yet begun to think seriously about an agenda for the peace conference itself, for instance, considering that premature just now.

The Palestinians, a key party, have not agreed to attend.

That spotlights the biggest remaining obstacle — Israel's insistence on limiting any Palestinian



delegation to exclude PLO members or residents of east Jerusalem and Palestinian refusal to submit to Israeli veto on this shuns official contact.

He worked with the Soviets and others to get Syria to join the conference, bringing a main Arab power into the process and making it hard for Israel to say no.

Now that Israel has agreed, the pressure is on Europe, the United States and Arab lands.

In visits over the past few days, Mr. Baker moved to repair ties between the United States and the North African countries of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco that frayed during the Gulf war, when Iraq attracted popular support in those areas.

The three countries are close to the PLO and may be able to help persuade it to let Palestinians

— except the PLO, which Israel considers a terrorist group and with which Washington now shuns official contact.

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Iraqi dream of life in nuclear club turns sour

By Nicholas Phythian
Reuter

BAGHDAD — When President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday was 16, he told a visiting journalist his ambition was to become a nuclear scientist.

Iraq, he said, would need specialists in the field once it entered

the nuclear club.

Just over a decade later, Iraq had built up a nuclear programme which has both surprised and won the admiration of U.N. inspectors scouring the country for evidence of a secret nuclear weapons project.

Iraq has said repeatedly its nuclear programme was for peaceful research only. The world, and the United States in particular, does not believe it.

President George Bush has accused President Saddam Hussein

of lying to conceal a weapons

programme and threatened military strikes if Iraq does not come clean on its nuclear secrets.

Not long after the Iraqi leader became president in 1979, an interviewer asked him whether Iraq, flush with oil money, planned to acquire a nuclear bomb.

"I think that if you ask any person in the world whether he would like to possess a nuclear bomb, he will tell you that he would," he said.

"I do not believe nuclear weapons can be used for peaceful scientific purposes in an undeveloped, bedouin society," he added.

In Europe and in North America and any place in the developed world these facilities would be recognised as world-class," he added.

But with sanctions squeezing

"brainchild."

Mr. Kay, who led an earlier inspection team which flushed out evidence of a secret uranium enrichment programme, said on Friday the programme could not be for peaceful purposes.

The three methods used — electromagnetic isotope separation, centrifugal and chemical enrichment — pointed to military intentions, he added. "They were conducted in secret and at cost yields that would have made sense only for a programme dedicated to non-peaceful uses."

One feature of the electromagnetic isotope separation method — the technique used by the United States to develop the bomb it dropped on Hiroshima in 1945 — is that it uses more electricity than could be generated with the enriched uranium.

As a signatory of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, Iraq had a duty to inform the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of all aspects of its nuclear programme.

Iraq says it kept its enrichment programme secret for security reasons.

Iraq recalls that in 1981 Israeli war planes smashed the French-built Iraqi research reactor at Osirak and it describes Israel as an aggressive and unfettered nuclear power.

Mr. Uday, who is now 27, has meanwhile dropped his nuclear ambitions.

A soccer fanatic, he heads Iraq's Olympic Association and runs Babil, one of Iraq's livelier newspapers.

Iraq says it only succeeded in slightly enriching half a kilogramme of uranium. Estimates of the amount of highly enriched uranium needed to make nuclear warheads range from 10 kilograms upwards.

But it has also admitted making small amounts of plutonium — a substance used almost exclusively in nuclear weapons.

Estimates of how far Iraq is from acquiring a bomb vary from one or two to five years.

The true nature of the programme remained unknown because the calutrons used to enrich the uranium were home-made.

"The intelligence community has been taken by surprise on this one," a member of an earlier team said.

Much of the equipment for the nuclear programme was destroyed in Gulf war air raids and Iraq tried to hide much of what survived from U.N. inspection.

The inspectors say that even with full cooperation it could take several months to build up a complete picture of what Iraq's nuclear aims and capabilities really were.

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Hopes raised for all-out swap deal

(Continued from page 1)

group believed to hold seven of its missing servicemen for information that might lead to talks on a wide-ranging swap.

"Israel again appeals to all the countries headed by Iran and Syria, and to all the organisations holding captive and missing Israelis, to permit and approach to them or show evidence of them," a defence ministry statement said.

"This will enable negotiations (to take place) for the release of all the hostages including captured and missing Israeli soldiers ... and (for Israel) to free Lebanese prisoners it holds."

The RIO and other kidnap groups have long demanded the freeing of Arabs held by the Jewish state and its militia allies in South Lebanon as a precondition for the freeing of Westerners.

But Israel is equally adamant that it will not be party to a swap unless its missing servicemen, or the remains of those who might have died, are returned.

"We hope that the release of Mr. Tracy and Mr. McCarthy will constitute the beginning of closing the file of all hostages," Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister

Yousef Shakkour told reporters after Mr. Tracy was handed over in Damascus to U.S. Charge d'Affaires John Craig.

British Foreign Office Minister Douglas Hogg, who travelled with Mr. Perez de Cuello to the base, said it would be "extremely helpful" if the Israelis released some additional prisoners in southern Lebanon.

The commander of an Israeli-backed Lebanese militia said Sunday he would release no prisoners from his jail unless the trade included his and Israel's missing servicemen.

Antoine Lahad, commander of the Israeli-financed South Lebanon Army (SLA) said the SLA holds 275 Lebanese detainees in its Al Khami prison. He said: "Israel has not asked me to release any prisoners. Even if they ask me, without the release of Israelis and SLA soldiers, I am not ready to respond."

Visiting a summer beach camp for Lebanese children in southern Israel, Gen. Lahad said nine SLA militiamen are missing in Lebanon. Three are believed held by the pro-Iranian Party of God, the apparent umbrella for factions holding hostages.

Gen. Lahad said that "If there is

no exchange including people from the SLA and the Israeli army, the people detained in Al Khami will continue to be held there."

Asked if he thought Israelis would be released from Lebanon soon, he said: "I think there is hope, but I don't know how soon."

Mr. Leyraud, the freed French relief worker, headed for home Sunday saying he had good memories of Lebanon despite being kidnapped.

"I will always have good memories of Lebanon," Mr. Leyraud, 26, who was abducted in Beirut Thursday and held captive for less than 60 hours, told reporters before leaving on a French military plane for Nice, France.

Asked whether he met any other Western hostages before his release Sunday Mr. Leyraud said: "I didn't meet any of them, but I (have since) learned that Mr. Edward Tracy was released."

"I was very pleased when I found out about the release (of Mr. Tracy) ... I hope that in the coming days new hostages are freed and that all the European and American hostages in Lebanon will be freed," Mr. Leyraud said.

Gen. Lahad said that "If there is

Ansar detainees reject U.S. peace process

AMMAN (J.T.) — Palestinian detainees held at an Israeli prison camp known as Ansar III have called for resistance to the American-led Middle East peace process saying that the "legitimate rights" of the Palestinian people are at risk.

A statement telefaxed to the Jordan Times and signed "detainees at Ansar III" called for the escalation of the 45-month-old Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories and "reinforce unity to confront this aggressive political attack and adhere strictly to Palestinians' legitimate right to self-determination, return and establishment of an independent state" under the leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO).

"The Palestinian national cause is currently in a sensitive and critical phase which is unique in the history of the Palestinian revolution and the Palestinian legitimate rights are at risk," said the statement.

It called for:

"... Adherence to the 1988 Palestinian peace initiative and to resolutions issued in Arab summits which are recognised as legitimate by the international community and advance the Palestinian national cause."

An international peace conference must be convened under the supervision of the United Nations with the participation of all concerned parties including the PLO and the five permanent members of the Security Council. We reject any conference which is not based on these principles.

"Second, we call upon the international community,

especially the United States, to apply a single standard when implementing international resolutions and to work to resolve the Zionist-Arab conflict on the basis of relevant international resolutions regarding legitimacy. Security Council resolutions 242, 338, 605, 607 and 181 must be implemented to ensure our people's legitimate national rights.

"Third, the right of the PLO to represent the Palestinian people in the peace process is



As American-led efforts regarding the Middle East peace process are continuing, Palestinian detainees at Ansar III are calling for an

escalation of the intifada to ensure that their rights are not threatened (FBe photo)

not negotiable. The delegation must be independent, on an equal footing with other concerned parties, in accordance with resolutions regarding international legitimacy.

"Fourth, any omission of our legitimate leadership and inalienable rights is an indication that there will never be peace and security in this troubled part of the world as long as the Palestinian cause is excluded from any political initiative to resolve the conflict.

"The only way to thwart American plans to bypass our people's national rights is through our reaffirmation to the world that the PLO is the key to resolution of the Arab-Zionist conflict and to reaffirm that our national cause is the legitimate rights.

"Fifth, we call on all countries which seek peace to defend our legitimate rights and apply a single standard in im-

plementation of all United Nations resolutions; the United States should not be allowed to impose its unilateral views on the resolution of the Arab-Zionist conflict.

"Sixth, any omission of our legitimate leadership and inalienable rights is an indication that there will never be peace and security in this troubled part of the world as long as the Palestinian cause is excluded from any political initiative to resolve the conflict.

"The only way to thwart American plans to bypass our people's national rights is through our reaffirmation to the world that the PLO is the key to resolution of the Arab-Zionist conflict and to reaffirm that our national cause is the legitimate rights.

"Seventh, we call on all countries which seek peace to defend our legitimate rights and apply a single standard in im-

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"Eighth, any omission of our legitimate leadership and inalienable rights is an indication that there will never be peace and security in this troubled part of the world as long as the Palestinian cause is excluded from any political initiative to resolve the conflict.

"The only way to thwart American plans to bypass our people's national rights is through our reaffirmation to the world that the PLO is the key to resolution of the Arab-Zionist conflict and to reaffirm that our national cause is the legitimate rights.

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American officials in Amman

(Continued from page 1) which the Americans sought to understand Palestinian requirements. The source described Mr. Hussein as "excited" after the meeting.

West Bank leaders have asked the U.S. for its backing on their right to appoint the Palestinian

delegation, including representatives from East Jerusalem. They also seek assurances regarding the transitional period of Palestinian autonomy in the occupied territories, the U.S.'s interpretation of Resolutions 242 and 338 and a halt to Jewish settlement in the territories.

More planes put on for Palestinians

(Continued from page 1)

The passengers are exclusively Palestinians forced to leave Kuwait because of Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) support for Iraq during its occupation of the emirate.

Those Palestinians who cannot afford air tickets take the tortuous land route to Jordan.

The Palestinian community was the largest expatriate group

in Kuwait before last year's Iraqi invasion. It has now shrunk to less than 90,000 from a pre-war peak of 350,000.

The exodus has gathered pace in recent weeks with parents trying to arrive in Amman in time to register their children in Jordanian schools.

Most Palestinians were either born or lived in Kuwait for decades but still hold Jordanian passports.

UNESCO chief shot dead in Amman

(Continued from page 1)

Under a previous agreement with the Lebanese government UNESCO undertook to return to the Lebanese capital, where the situation is now slowly settling down, and the decision to move the regional office back there was taken in line with this agreement, the UNESCO official said.

Jordanian police meanwhile drew a dragnet for the suspected assailant, a resident of Russeifa.

Colleagues said the 41-year-old suspect was married and had eight children.

According to the eyewitnesses, Sunday's attack came after local newspapers reported that the UNESCO's move back to Beirut meant that local employees will be terminated.

The assailant was attending a 8 a.m. meeting at the UNESCO office where Dr. Khawad was scheduled to explain to the staff details related to the transfer and to assure them "that the rights of the employees will be honoured," said one eyewitness. "But he (the

assailant) came late to the meeting, locked the door of the room and started shouting that he did not want to lose his job," the witness said.

"Dr. Khawad did not respond, and then (the assailant) produced papers from a briefcase he has carrying and waved them around saying that they were reports that UNESCO employees in Jordan would lose their jobs," the witness recounted.

He also produced containers with he said were full of petrol which will be used to burn down the UNESCO office," according to the witness.

"People started screaming and it was then that he pulled out a gun and shot Dr. Khawad," the witness said.

None of the eyewitnesses could say whether the first shot killed the director-general since, all of them said, they had dived under the conference table for cover.

"After one shot, (the assailant) left the room and others in the room also fled in panic," according to another eyewitness. "But he (the

assailant) came back and fired several more shots at Dr. Khawad. The female secretary was wounded in the leg."

The third victim of the attack, another driver, "apparently walked into the room to face the assailant, who opened fire shouting that he (the assailant) deserved the job more than the other one," the witness said.

"Then he fled."

Police said they had launched a wide manhunt for the suspect, who, according to sources, also contacted a local journalist — who had written about the UNESCO controversy — to proclaim that the UNESCO move to Beirut meant a death sentence on him and he had passed on the sentence to the UNESCO director-general, who, he felt, was instrument in his (perceived) loss of job."

Public Prosecutor Fouad Daradkeh said investigations were continuing and vowed that the suspect would soon be caught. "It is only a matter of time," he told the Jordan Times.

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Sports

Senna wins Hungarian GP

BUDAPEST (R) — Ayrton Senna led the Hungarian Grand Prix from start to finish Sunday to increase his world championship lead and put McLaren back in business.

The Brazilian world champion, who won the first four races of the season, has been eclipsed by Briton Nigel Mansell of late and had looked in danger of losing his overall lead.

But on Sunday he fought off Mansell and his Williams team mate Riccardo Patrese of Italy with a commanding drive that sent McLaren back to the top of the constructors' table.

Mansell, winner of the last three races, finished second just 4.5 seconds behind Senna. He had staged a determined charge against Senna but faded in the last quarter of the race.

Patrese was third 10.9 seconds away.

Halard, Fernandez gain Albuquerque Slams final

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (R) — Top-seeded Julie Halard of France and second-seeded Gigi Fernandez will be seeking their first major title of their respective careers Sunday when they meet in the final of the \$150,000 Virginia Slams of Albuquerque.

Cuba defeats U.S. in women's basketball

HAVANA (AP) — Cuba delivered a 1-2 punch to U.S. gold-medal aspirations in women's basketball and diving Saturday, while an American boxer found that fighting Cubans wasn't the only way to lose at the Pan American Games.

The Cubans eliminated the United States 86-81 in the semifinals of the basketball tournament, and the long faces of the U.S. women told the story.

"I was just trying to soak up the moment," said Teresa Edwards, who sat on the bench with her head in her hands after it was over. "Just as you soak up the victories, you have to soak up the losses, and that's what I was trying to do."

For the first time since the 1982 world championships, the American women went home without the gold. They had won eight straight international titles since then, including two Olympics. Cuba plays Brazil for the title Sunday, while the United States faces Canada for the bronze.

A Cuban, Roger Ramirez, also won the men's 10-metre platform diving, ending 16 years of U.S. Pan Am domination in the sport, and U.S. boxer John Herrera was stopped by little-known Luis Fleitas of Brazil 1:11 of the third round of their 12-pound (51 kilogramme) fight.

U.S. boxers now are 4-4 in the games, the other three having lost to Cubans.

It was a big day for the host country of the Pan Am Games as Cuba built on its gold-medal lead over the United States in almost every quarter. Through Saturday, the Cubans had 92 golds and the Americans had 64.

In athletics, Javier Sotomayor of Cuba won his duel with American Hollis Conway in the high jump, although he failed to surpass his world record of 2.44 metres.

The basketball loss was the second here for the U.S. women. They lost in the first round to Brazil, ending a streak of 42 straight major international victories, but this loss ended their major streak.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANIAH MURSH
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SOUND INSTRUCTION FOR INTERMEDIATES

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH

* A 4
K 9 5 2
Q 9 7 4 2
J

WEST

K 6 3 J 9 8 2
Q 4 A 10 8 7 3
K 8 5 Void
Q 10 8 6 4 3 Q 9 7 2

SOUTH

* Q 10 7 5
J 6
A 10 6 3
A K 5

THE bidding:
South West North East
1 Pass 1 Pass
1 Pass 3 Pass
3 NT Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Four of ♦
Bridge books, both the good and the bad, tend to follow a familiar format. So when one comes along that contains a lot of excellent advice for the average player in an interesting and informative presentation, *Intermediate Bridge in 27 Weeks*, by Alan Truscott, Perigee Books, 224 pp., paperback. Available from The Bridge World, 26 W. 24th St., New York, N.Y. 10025, \$10.95 post free, can recommend it wholeheartedly.

Alan Truscott, bridge editor of *The New York Times*, has selected his material carefully. Each hand

apparently feeling the strain, waved Mansell through to take up the chase.

Both Senna and Mansell set a series of fastest race laps on laps 55 and 56 that was the Briton's final effort and he started dropping back to conserve second place.

The Brazilian, who ran out of fuel for the second successive race in Germany two weeks ago, had built up a comfortable 11-second lead over Mansell with 10 laps to go.

On the final lap Senna eased off sufficiently to allow Mansell to close the gap — although never close enough to threaten him.

For the first 44 laps of the 77-lap race the three cars were virtually nose to tail, rarely separated by more than a couple of seconds.

On lap 45 Patrese, his tyres

had qualified on pole position for the first time since Monaco in May, made a clean start and was first away, followed by Patrese with Mansell close behind.

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For the first 44 laps of the 77-lap race the three cars were virtually nose to tail, rarely separated by more than a couple of seconds.

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For the first 44 laps

Hong Kong bank panic blamed on anxiety

By Victoria McGlothen
Reader

HONG KONG — A rumour-sparked run on cash at two major banks in Hong Kong with branches worldwide has raised the question of why depositors in the British colony should be so ready to panic.

Theories abound. First up is that public confidence has been battered by the government's handling last month of the closure of the Bank of Credit and Commerce Hong Kong (BCCCHK), the local unit of the scandal-hit BCCI.

Theorists in the crowded colony also point to mob psychology, the pervasive fear of being lost in the race, plus simple greed.

A psychiatrist blamed 1997 — the year when Britain is due to hand Hong Kong back to China.

Rumours of financial troubles triggered heavy withdrawals first at U.S.-based Citibank, then at British-based Standard Chartered branches throughout the colony over the past four days.

Standard Chartered's Hong Kong chief executive Ian Wilson, a new arrival here, said he was bemused by the run.

"Out of 50 countries, this is the only place where this is happening," he said. "We can't understand why there's a problem at all."

Huge withdrawals slashed

the bank's deposit base by two billion H.K. dollars (\$250 million) Friday and spilled over to Saturday.

A prominent psychiatrist, born in China and raised in Hong Kong, said the thought of the 1997 handover has made an already jumpy population even edgier.

"We have a higher level of anxiety here than in other places," the psychiatrist, who asked not to be named, said.

"Everybody in Hong Kong feels very insecure because of 1997. For insecure people, emotion overtakes their ability to analyse."

As throngs of panicked depositors, who began queuing at Citibank Wednesday, thinned by midday Friday, some 500 savers had already packed the huge marble lobby of Standard Chartered's head office.

Meanwhile rumours swirled that Citibank had closed its operations worldwide, and Standard Chartered stock had been suspended and its banking licence withdrawn.

Executives at both banks denied the rumours.

"(Hong Kong) is a very small, close-knit community, and rumours spread quickly," Mr. Wilson said.

"In another environment where people live further apart from each other you don't have that happen."

From executives to secretaries, vast numbers of people in the cramped, money-driven

Hong Kong carry portable telephones or pagers, giving quick access to business and family connections — and the rumour mill.

The psychiatrist said the drive to make money had been heightened by anxiety over 1997 and a rush to secure foreign passports and the promise of better life.

"Money now means more to Hong Kong people," she said.

"With money, they can emigrate."

But she said mob mentality had contributed to the bank panic and others before it: "To be last is to be inferior, a loser."

Hong Kong has a history of bank collapse. In the early to mid-1980s, panicked savers ran to pull their money from six banks, most based here.

In 1984, they even stormed a cake shop.

Rumours that Maria's Cakes, a well-known chain of shops, was about to go bankrupt swept the city, triggering a run by hundreds of Hong Kong Chinese, clutching gift certificates for sponge cakes and fruit tarts.

Today Maria's is still thriving, its fruit tarts usually sold out shortly after midday, its sponge cakes by closing time.

Hong Kong's Monetary Affairs Secretary David Wenthil blamed the bank panic on "malicious lies" and public stupidity.

Financial analysts blamed

the government's swift reversal on the Hong Kong unit of Abu Dhabi-controlled Credit and Commerce International. The government shut BCCCHK branches here just two days after stating its confidence in the bank.

One young trader waiting to reclaim his savings Friday at Standard Chartered's head office said he no longer trusted government reassurances. "I trust my eyes and I see all these people here so I want to join them."

Bt CHK savers risk losing most of their money. The closure spurred brief runs three weeks ago on two Arab-controlled banks.

The main reason (for the panic) is the bad behaviour of the government over BCCCHK," John Mulcahy, research director at Peregrine Securities, said.

"Now people in Hong Kong are very suspicious and cynical about any statement made by the government."

On Friday, the Hong Kong government injected 200 million H.K. dollars (\$25.6 million) into the banking system. Local bankers were to bolster confidence in the colony's banking system.

"When people start to mistrust, they feel safer to have their money at arm's length," Mr. Mulcahy said.

"And there are no reward for being brave or foolhardy with your life savings."

Iran ready to buy U.S. maize

PARIS (R) — Trade between Iran and the United States is about to resume with the first sale of U.S. maize to Tehran since 1981.

French traders said Tehran had accepted this week to take delivery of up to 60,000 tonnes of maize, possibly more, from the United States, the world's largest corn exports.

Trade between the two countries came to a halt shortly after the Islamic revolution in 1979 deposed the Shah of Iran.

That year fundamentalist students seized the U.S. embassy in Tehran and held 52 people hostage for 444 days with the approval of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the country's new leader.

"Iran, which has refused until now to buy from the U.S., agreed to buy one or two cargoes, or 30,000 to 60,000 tonnes, with an option for U.S. maize," a trader close to the deal said.

Exporters involved in the transaction said U.S. sales to Iran were not under embargo and therefore perfectly legal.

"The Iranians had been boycotting the U.S. but there has never been an embargo on grain sales to Iran," the trader said.

A U.S. embassy official in Paris confirmed that there were controls but no trade embargo.

Some traders said Iran may have bought more than 60,000 tonnes. One mentioned a possible volume of 150,000 tonnes. Tehran asked several traders to present offers for U.S. maize and this may have led to further sales.

In the past 10 years Tehran has imported some one million tonnes of maize a year, mostly from Australia and Argentina and occasionally the European Community, traders said.

Analysts see the deal as a clear but still timid signal of Iran's willingness to renew trade ties with the United States.

"Iranians are making a move towards the United States, but I wouldn't say it's a revolution," a political analyst said.

"The Iranians are opening up to Western countries and I believe it's a good move because the United States accounts for 90 per cent of the world maize trade," the trader said.

Ukraine halts private grain exports, fearing shortages

Farmers hold back grain'

Soviet media said Thursday that arch-conservative Ivan Polozkov had been appointed first deputy agriculture minister. Mr. Polozkov, an opponent of radical market reforms, was ousted this week as leader of the Russian Federation's Communist Party.

Price rises predicted

Soviet retail prices for most goods are expected to rise in the wake of more expensive fuel costs, dealing another blow to the country's long-suffering consumers. The Russian Information Agency (RIA) says.

An official at the Soviet Oil and Gas Industry Ministry was quoted as saying wholesale oil prices could triple to 210 roubles per tonne (\$120 at the commercial exchange rate) as a result of reforms aimed at boosting output.

"This is the only way the (oil and gas) sector will be able to manage to survive," said the unnamed official.

"Naturally, they (the prices) will be higher than the existing ones," RIA said, adding that there would be a knock-on effect on fuel prices and most consumer goods.

Soviet inflation is currently running at about 100 per cent a year, according to some independent estimates, and state shops are unable to supply even the most basic consumer goods.

RIA said millions of Muscovites in cooperative housing would have to pay more than four times as much next year for heating and water.

U.N. help sought

The Soviet government will hold preliminary talks with U.N. experts on securing technical advice for its planned move to a market economy, the authoritative daily Izvestia said.

The newspaper said the cabinet had authorised the Foreign Ministry to discuss a possible cooperation deal with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at a cost of \$1.7 million to the Soviet treasury.

In exchange, Moscow would receive advice on the transition to a market economy and on its stalled clean-up after the 1986 nuclear disaster at Chernobyl.

The agricultural daily Sel'skay Zhizn said farmers were turning their backs on the state because they had no confidence in the country's agrarian policies.

ECONOMIC NEWS IN BRIEF

German, Italian banks to lend Iran \$856m

NICOSIA (R) — German and Italian banks will lend Iran a total of \$856 million to help finance petrochemical projects, Tehran Radio quoted Oil Minister Ghosnareza Azarzadeh as saying. The minister said Deutsche bank will provide 500 million marks (\$291 million) and Italian banks \$565 million. The loans were linked to separate contracts concluded between the national petrochemical company and Italian and German firms for the projects in the central city of Arak and Bandar Khomeini on the Gulf coast, he said.

NBC cuts staff, but network not for sale

NEW YORK (AP) — The president of the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) says more staff cuts are coming at the NBC television network, where steep ratings losses and a bad economy mean the loss of tens of millions of dollars this summer and fall. But the cuts are not being made to ready the network for sale, Robert Wright told NBC employees in a closed-circuit showing of a question-and-answer session with six staffers. There has been speculation that General Electric Company, which paid \$4 billion in 1986 for NBC and its parent RCA Corporation, wants to reduce the network's staff to make it attractive to a buyer, possibly a Hollywood studio. "The answer is no. It is not for sale," Mr. Wright said. Nor, he said, are other divisions of the National Broadcasting Corporation, which include the television stations division and the company's cable interests, including CNBC. Rival networks CBS and ABC also are retrenching because of lean times, lowered ratings and a poor advertising market.

Bulgaria: Libya agrees to oil-for-debt deal

SOFIA (R) — Libya will supply Bulgaria with more oil in lieu of debt payments, Bulgarian Foreign Minister Atanas Papazov said. He told reporters after returning from Tripoli that the deal covered \$21 million that Libya owed the Bulgarian government. The newspaper Otechestven Vestnik reported Friday that Sofia still had to decide whether \$27 million interest on the debt should also be paid in oil. Libya is already paying in oil for \$284 million it owes the

Bulgarian trade organisation Technoexport. Mr. Papazov said a Libyan tanker loaded with oil worth \$11.5 million was expected to arrive in Bulgaria this month.

S. Koreans seek part in N. Korean project

SEOUL (R) — South Korean big business wants to take part in a major river development project for communist North Korea, news reports said Sunday. The Chosun Ilbo and the Hankook Ilbo newspapers quoted industrial sources as saying the country's top business groups, including Hyundai, Daewoo, Samsung and Dong Ah, were seeking ways to take part in dredging work at the mouth of the Tumen River where the borders of North Korea, China and the Soviet Union meet. If the firms are successful, they will be the first South Korean companies to take part in a development project in North Korea since the end of the 1950-53 Korean war. The dredging work was needed to open a river route to help develop North Korea's territory around the Tumen River into a special economic district, the sources were quoted as saying. At a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conference in early July in Mongolia, North Korea invited South Korea to attend a multilateral meeting in China to discuss the river project. Officials at the South Korean Unification Ministry said the government was "very positively" considering attending the meeting in China due to be held from Aug. 27 to 31.

Oman's balance of trade rises

NICOSIA (R) — Oman's balance of trade in 1990 grew by 28.8 per cent to 3.177 billion riyals compared to 2.466 billion riyals in 1989, the Omani News Agency (ONA) said quoting a central bank statement. One Omani riyal is worth about \$2.60. ONA said the value of the sultante's oil exports in 1990 increased by 39.3 per cent to 1.934 billion riyals compared to 1.388 billion riyals in 1989. Non-oil exports grew by three per cent last year to 69 million riyals from 67 million riyals in 1989, it said. Fish topped the list of non-oil exports in 1990 to 17.3 million riyals followed by copper 12.7 million riyals, it said. Imports in 1990 increased by 18.2 per cent to 1.067 billion riyals compared to 910 million riyals a year earlier, it said.

China expects substantial progress on GATT bid

BEIJING (R) — A Chinese official negotiating Beijing's entry to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) has said he expects substantial progress this year.

Li Zhongzhou, quoted by the official China Daily on Sunday, also criticised Taiwan's efforts to join GATT, saying Taipei was indulging in wishful thinking if it thought it could get in without China's approval.

Mr. Li, who supervises GATT-related issues at the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade, said China was working on a report about its economic

reform programme to submit to GATT later this year.

The report will be a supplement to the earlier report on our open policies and reform plans before 1989, and we have initiated more reforms in many aspects since then," Mr. Li said.

"We hope the coming 10th round of meetings will be the beginning of substantial progress," he said.

China's last attempt to join the group last September ended inconclusively.

Mr. Li said a nine-member team sent to Europe last month to promote China's GATT ap-

plication had had considerable success, and that another group led by Vice Foreign Minister Tong Zhiqiang would travel to the United States next week.

China has lobbied hard to get back into GATT, which Beijing quit after the Communist government took power in 1949.

A slow-down in economic reform since the military crackdown on pro-democracy protests in June, 1989, has stalled the process, however. Some members doubt that Beijing can live up to GATT's goal of building a world free-market system.

China supported the admission

of Hong Kong, Britain's capitalist colony which returns to Chinese rule in 1997. But it has adamantly objected to plans for admission by rival Taiwan, which China views as a renegade province.

Taiwan, the vibrant capitalist island ruled by the nationalists since they were driven from China in 1949, submitted its application to join GATT as a separate customs territory on Jan. 1, 1990.

Mr. Li underscored Beijing's opposition to the plan, saying that Taiwan's leaders were muddying the issue by trying to win foreign support for their bid.

China supported the admission

American Community School

The American Community School announces a new programme for 4 and 5 year olds for the 1991-92 school year. The new K-1 and K-2 class will provide a developmental programme with appropriate learning activities for each age group. The emphasis will be on presenting creative lessons designed to allow the pre-school and kindergarten age child to develop socially, physically, emotionally and academically in a positive environment.

Classes will be five days per week from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. A reduced tuition and capital assessment rate will apply. Bus transportation is available for an additional fee.

Please contact ACS (813944-6) for additional information.

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FOR RENT MODERN OFFICES</b

3 reported killed; another PoW swap due in Yugoslavia

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (AP) — Three people were reported killed Sunday in new fighting in Croatia, marring the ceasefire that has kept uneasy peace between warring Serbs and Croats.

But the federal presidency commission monitoring the fifth day of the ceasefire remained cautiously optimistic, saying another 20 of the several hundred people taken prisoner in the undeclared war should regain freedom Sunday.

The first five prisoners were swapped in a tense exchange late Saturday in Vinkovci in the east Croatian region of Slavonia, site of much of the fighting that has killed more than 200 people since Croatia declared independence on June 25.

Leaders of Serbia, the largest Yugoslav republic, say Croatia can leave Yugoslavia, but cannot take along Serbs or the territory they inhabit. Croatian leaders have vowed not to cede land to its

600,000 Serbs, 12 per cent of its population.

A Croatian television cameraman, Goran Lederer, and another Croat named as Ivan Rokvic were killed in a two-and-a-half hour battle around the strategic town of Kostajnica Saturday night, Croatian Radio said.

The town south of Zagreb is a key to control of the Banija region separating ethnic Serb strongholds in western and eastern Croatia, and has seen fierce clashes in recent weeks.

Mr. Lederer was first hit by a bullet during a machine-gun attack before a mortar bomb caused him three more serious wounds, the radio said.

He died en route to hospital, the radio said. It added the federal army, which Croatia charges has backed the rebel Serbs, refused to send a helicopter to evacuate Mr. Lederer.

Irfan Ajanovic, a member of

the federal presidency commission overseeing the ceasefire, said he had no confirmation of the new deaths.

The third was reported Saturday by a Yugoslav cameraman who said he filmed Croatian security forces shooting at three armed Serbs attacking their position near Osiček in Slavonia. One of the three was shot dead, and the other two escaped, the cameraman said.

Mr. Ajanovic said about 20 more captives in the conflict should be freed Sunday. Serbs and Croats have not yet submitted complete lists of those captured, but several hundred people are believed to have been seized, he said.

Political manoeuvring by Serbia's uncompromising president, Slobodan Milosevic, threatens to spread conflict to the central state of Bosnia-Hercegovina.

The republic has a mixed population, just over 40 per cent Muslim, about 30 per cent Serbs and 18 per cent Croat.

Mr. Milosevic has invited its leaders and those from Serbia's ally, Montenegro, to talk Monday in Belgrade on forming a new, smaller Yugoslavia.

schduled in Zagreb Sunday to iron out the problems.

The hitches illustrated how hard it is to establish trust between the Orthodox Serbs and Roman Catholic Croats, Yugoslavia's two largest ethnic groups.

The recent fighting has caused tens of thousands of people on both sides to flee villages where they have co-existed for decades or even centuries. Many refugees vow never to live with other side again.

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Japan plans military shopping spree next year

TOKYO (R) — Japan's Defence Ministry, after budget cutbacks to help pay for Tokyo's Gulf war contributions, plans a shopping spree next year that includes three U.S. patriot missile systems, Kyodo news agency said Sunday.

Defence officials, drawing up budget requests, will ask for about 4,600 billion yen (\$33.8 billion) in fiscal 1992 beginning next April, Kyodo said.

The figure is 5.38 per cent more than the 1991 budget allocation.

The shopping list includes items originally scheduled for

purchase in the current fiscal year, including Patriot missile systems of the kind used in the Gulf war.

Defence officials were forced to cut back their 1991 purchases after Tokyo allocated 100 billion yen (\$735 million) from the defence budget to contribute to the (\$9 billion) that Japan pledged for U.S.-led forces arrayed against Iraq.

Other items slated for purchase next year include 11 U.S.-designed F-15 warplanes, two destroyers, two anti-submarine aircraft and one submarine, Kyodo said.

Peruvian rebels kill 2 Polish priests, 3 mayors

LIMA (R) — Maoist guerrillas raided two northern Andean towns killing two Polish priests and two Peruvian mayors, authorities said Saturday.

A third mayor and a municipal aide were killed by leftist guerrillas in another northern region, they said.

Officials described the killing of the priests as the latest attack on religious or foreign aid workers in Peru.

Attackers believed to be members of the Shining Path guerrilla group entered the town of Paracoto in the region of Ancash, killing Michal Tomaszek, 32, and Zbigniew Strzalkowski, 38, the officials said.

Reverend Antonio Culebras, who works in the Catholic Church's diocesan office in Chimbote some 390 kilometres north of Lima, said the two members of the Polish Franciscan Order had been working in the town for about a year and had received a threat from Maoist guerrillas in recent weeks.

"We imagine it was a terrorist attack and Shining Path is the group that operates in the zone,"

Kaifu nudges China on human rights

PEKING (Agencies) — Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu, the first leader of a major industrialised democracy to visit China since the bloody 1989 crackdown on dissent, asked Peking's hard-line leaders Sunday to respect human rights.

But Mr. Kaifu used vague and genteel language to avoid offending his hosts in Peking, Japanese officials said.

"Whatever the nation, upholding the fundamental human rights of its people and steadily undertaking political and economic reform based on the principle of politics for the good of its citizens is a path that will in the end strengthen the nation's ties with the rest of the world," Mr. Kaifu said.

"There should be complete agreement on the need to implement the wishes of the majority, or to understand accurately the will of the people and to represent that will in the political process," he told an audience of Chinese dignitaries at the Sino-Japanese Youth Exchange Centre.

Mr. Kaifu, who arrived amid much fanfare Saturday, has by his presence given China a much-needed boost and ushered it out of the diplomatic wilderness it has been in since the June, 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators.

In July, Shining Path killed three Japanese technicians and suspected guerrillas shot a Spanish priest. Two months earlier an Australian nun and five Peruvians were shot by suspected guerrillas and two workers for the Evangelical aid organisation World Vision were killed in Lima.

In a separate incident Saturday, leftist guerrillas killed the mayor of another northern town and a municipal aide while they were performing a mass wedding at an agricultural cooperative, a police official in the town said.

On Sunday he returned to Tiananmen to lay a wreath on the monument to the people's heroes, a tribute to the revolutionary martyrs who died during the civil war.

The Japanese leader applauded China's announcement Saturday that it would sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

China will be the last major nation possessing nuclear weapons to become a signatory.

"I salute this as an epochal step on China's part towards the common goal of the international community to strengthen the regime of nuclear non-proliferation," Mr. Kaifu said.

He urged China to participate in Japan's efforts to pass a United Nations resolution which would require nations which export arms to report all transactions to the world body.

Mr. Kaifu also reported Tokyo's apologies for invading China prior to World War II and pledged that Japan will not return to its militarist past.

"The Japanese people are determined never again to make war," he said.

Mr. Kaifu also outlined Japan's vision of a new world order — one that differs from China's view.

"The new international order we seek is one where peace and security are ensured, where freedom and democracy are respected, and where world prosperity is guaranteed through open market economies," Mr. Kaifu said.

China's exports of conventional arms to developing nations and especially to the Middle East have become a major concern for developed nations, particularly the United States.

The church was frequented by right-wing group of Thais, plus some Laotians and Vietnamese, who came to this country after marrying American servicemen.

The temple — associated with the Thai sect of Buddhism — was used as a place to worship and socialise.

A ceremony marking completion of the training was to have been held Sunday, said Robert Johnson whose wife, Bupha, is a worshipper.

The temple is in a remote area surrounded by cotton fields about 30 kilometres from downtown Phoenix. A sign identifies it as Promkunaram Wat and also says Buddhist temple.

Sheriff's spokesman Duane Brady said everyone known to be staying on temple grounds was killed. The bodies were found in a living room of the complex.

About 100 grief-stricken tem-

9 killed at Buddhist temple in Arizona

PHOENIX (AP) — Nine people, including several monks, have been found slain in a Buddhist temple that serves as a community centre to the city's Thai residents.

All were found shot to death in one room Saturday, said Maricopa County Sheriff Tom Agnos. The dead included an elderly woman and a man in his early 20s, Sheriff Agnos said.

Investigators at first said seven were monks but later said the number of monks was uncertain.

Temple worshippers at the scene said one of the dead was a young man who had recently immigrated from Thailand and had just been initiated into the order.

The temple has gold and jade statues, leading to speculation that robbery was the motive, but Sheriff Agnos said it was too early to be sure. Department experts in Asian gang violence were investigating at the scene.

The temple is in a remote area surrounded by cotton fields about 30 kilometres from downtown Phoenix. A sign identifies it as Promkunaram Wat and also says Buddhist temple.

Sheriff's spokesman Duane Brady said everyone known to be staying on temple grounds was killed. The bodies were found in a living room of the complex.

About 100 grief-stricken tem-

ple members gathered at the scene and stayed there throughout the day.

One of them, Jerry Hastings, 19, said his grandmother is a Buddhist nun who had been living at the temple. He believed she was dead because officials told his mother that no one was found alive inside.

The mourners — most of them Thais — weathered 100-degree F (37 C) heat in their vigil. They and reporters were kept several hundred metres from the temple, which appeared to be a one-story building flanked by shrubbery.

Worshippers said only six of the temple's monks were in town.

They said an elderly woman and two young men or teenagers had been undergoing a three-week training programme in self-discipline and self-awareness at the temple.

A ceremony marking completion of the training was to have been held Sunday, said Robert Johnson whose wife, Bupha, is a worshipper.

The church was frequented by right-wing group of Thais, plus some Laotians and Vietnamese, who came to this country after marrying American servicemen.

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